

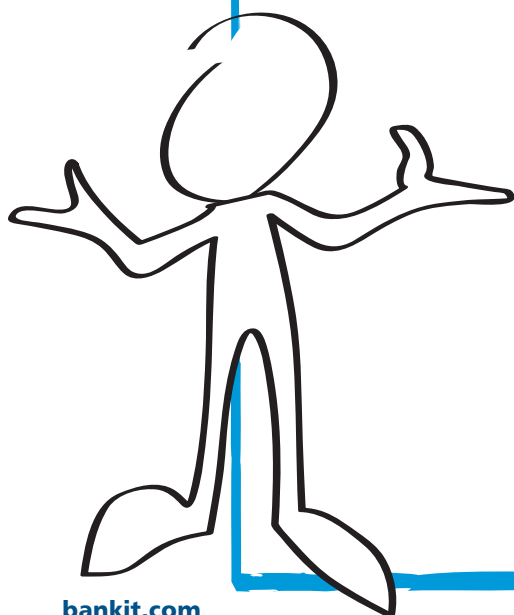
Protecting Your Identity

Every year, thieves steal too much sensitive financial and personal information. An identity thief can hurt your credit rating and your credit history if you don't catch the theft soon enough. Protect these aspects of your financial and personal information:

- Your social security number
- Your driver's license number
- Your credit card number, expiration date, and security code
- Your bank account numbers
- Your passport number
- Your birth month, day, and year
- Your full legal name (first, middle, and last)
- User names for online accounts
- Passwords for online accounts

When you renew your driver's license, open a bank account, or file your taxes, you'll be asked for some of this information. As long as you're working with the Department of Motor Vehicles, a personal banker, or your filling out your tax forms, you're okay. That's also true when you're working with a government agency (such as applying for a passport or getting your social security card). As long as you're at a legitimate passport office or the social security administration, you are usually safe.

Children often don't realize which information not to share. Most parents do not tell their children their social security number. Many parents also encourage their children not to give out their address or other personal information to other people. Protecting your—and your child's—identity is essential during these times when identity theft is becoming more common.



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